



## **INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN AFRICA: DYNAMICS, CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES**

**Okoche John Michael Maxel<sup>i</sup>**

Smishel International consulting Group,  
P.O. Box 24274- 00100 GPO Nairobi, Kenya

### **Abstract:**

Quality assurance involves the systematic implementation, monitoring and evaluation of products and services and certification of fitness for use. The process involves utilization of a framework that involves determination of adequate technical requirements of inputs and outputs, certification and rating of suppliers, testing of procured materials for conformance to established quality, performance, safety and reliability of standards; proper receipt, storage, issue of material, audit of process quality, evaluation of process to establish required corrective response and audit of final output for final conformance to technical reliability, maintainability and performance requirement. Worldwide Universities have established mechanisms for streamlining quality in the university systems. This paper appreciates that external quality assurance mechanism undertaken by external parties but argues that internal quality assurance is equally critical and paramount in the pursuit of quality in the provision of university education. Quality assurance by national accreditation bodies; Ministry of education by externally undertaking quality assurance are critical in the improvement of university standards. However, internal quality assurance mechanisms by Universities are more critical in improvement of standards. This paper has emphasized streamlining of internal quality assurance mechanisms within universities as equally critical in the improvement of quality of education. The concept of internal quality assurance has been systematically examined by looking at dynamics, challenges and solutions. The paper has examined aspects internal quality assurance; quality assurance policy, staff development capacity, research performance, curriculum design and development, teaching and learning, student support, research performance,

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<sup>i</sup> Correspondence: email [okochem@gmail.com](mailto:okochem@gmail.com)

teaching and learning, effective university student assessment, infrastructure development, provision of quality education for students with specialised needs, inadequate capacity to undertake quality assurance, funding and budget constraints, negative attitude towards quality assurance, student-lecturer assessment and management support together with staff towards quality.

**Keywords:** quality assurance, internal and external, public and private universities

## 1. Introduction

Quality assurance was industrial practice mainly manufacturing industry main objective was to guarantee stakeholders expectation of quality (Ansah, 2015). Business dictionary defines quality assurance as a concept covers all the policies and systematic activities implemented within the quality system. The dictionary further explains quality assurance as a framework involving determination of adequate technical requirements of inputs and outputs, certification and rating of suppliers, testing of procured materials for conformance to established quality, performance, safety and reliability of standards; proper receipt, storage, issue of material, audit of process quality, evaluation of process to establish required corrective response and audit of final output for final conformance to technical reliability, maintainability and performance requirement. The QAA defines quality assurance as the 'systematic monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching, and the processes that support them, to make sure that the standards of academic awards meet UK expectations, and that the quality of the student learning experience is being safeguarded and improved.' The major objective of quality assurance in universities is provision of higher quality education. Woodhouse (2006) defines quality assurance as those systems, procedures, processes and actions intended to lead to the achievement, maintenance, monitoring and achievement of quality.

The purpose of quality is grooming academics, scholars and university products that are of high calibre in order to fulfil the aspirations of national governments, universities, and employers (Harman; 2000). Sursock (2011) argues that universities are increasingly viewed by policy makers as 'economic engines' and are seen as essential for ensuring knowledge production through research and innovation as well as the continuous up-skilling of the workforce. Quality assurance is helping universities and institutions of higher learning in improvement of standards therefore to fulfil the aspirations of stakeholders. El-Khawas (2013) argues that quality assurance now occupies a central place in higher education. Introduction of quality assurance in higher education has been marked with tremendous increase in favour and attention by education stakeholders. Many countries especially those in OECD have established

comprehensive arrangements for quality assurance in higher education (Gallagher, 2010). Oyewole (2012) asserts that at the global level UNESCO set up a Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher education, which among other things, seeks to support capacity development for quality assurance in national contexts. Recent developments in Africa's higher education systems point to an increasing focus on using quality assurance as an important mechanism to make African higher education more efficient and competitive (Materu, 2007; Jongsma, 2013; Kigotho, 2013; Mhlanga, 2008). Oyewole (2012) argues that Association of African Universities (AAU) launched a quality assurance programme in African Universities.

## 2. Dynamics of Quality Provision

Dynamics of quality education in Africa has gone through diverse dynamics historical and the trends in modern development. Historically Quality University in Africa has gone through different historical trends. There have different drivers to quality education in Africa right from inception of the first Universities in 1896 in Sierra Leone. The historical perspective of quality education can be best analysed by looking at the drivers of quality education during colonialism, independence, 1970 global economic crisis, liberalization movement in Africa, emergence of technology and the quality assurance movement in Africa.

**2.1 Colonialism and quality education:** the colonial period was marked with provision of university education to support the efforts of the colonial powers with management of administration. The different colonial powers had interest building critical skills that would help the colonial powers with management of the colonies. The colonial powers therefore had to mainstream the ideology of the universities with home country universities. Quality assurance had to strictly to follow the standards of the home countries. Colonial powers established universities in Africa to support the agendas of the home powers. The universities and institutions of higher learning automatically became part of the British, French, Portuguese or other systems of quality assurance through their partner Universities (Materu, 2006). Quality education in African Universities therefore was of high quality standards. University of Cape Town became mentor for Universities in South Africa, as the case for Fort hare University which was affiliated with Rhodes University (Materu, 2006). Quality of university education was driven by the parent institutions and mentors within Africa.

**2.2 Independence and post-independence quality education:** upon independence the powers that took over power were bent towards reversing the intention of the colonial

masters of continued control of Africa. Post-independence governments emphasis was separation from the colonial masters and empowerment of Africans in the various spheres of leadership. Southall (1974) argues that the post-independence political environment emphasized control of education by government. The post-independence era saw oversight of university education with various levels of authority; authoritarian, democratic, lessaifare (Bloom, Canning and Chan, 2006). The major driving factors; increased accessed, employment of Africans, control of university politics; i) authoritarian ii) promotion of cronies in management iii) internal conflicts, wars in Africa and global recession affected African continent.

**2.3 The Liberalization movement in 1980s:** the economic crisis of 1970s coupled with constraint in resources forced most governments undertake liberalization policy. African governments initiated programmes of education market liberalization in the 1980s as part of economic structural adjustment programmes. Kimenyi & Datta (2011) political and economic liberalization transferred power to private, regional and local authorities changed the dynamics. Liberalization resulted in the creation of more universities, emergence of actors without knowledge in education, increased enrolment of students. Nigeria saw tremendous expansion in the number of universities from 6 in 1970 to about 240 of higher education institutions and enrollment of over 1.5 million in 2006 (Okebukola, 2006). The old collegial model of quality assurance could no-longer be relied upon solely to ensure that the public is well served (Ncayiyana, 2006). This resulted in emergence of quality assurance movements across Africa in order to ensure quality provision of education in different areas. Recent developments in Africa's higher education systems point to an increasing focus on using quality assurance as an important mechanism to make African higher education more efficient and competitive (Materu, 2007; Jongsma, 2013; Kigotho, 2013; Mhlanga, 2008).

Critical examination of historical drivers in public and private university education Africa highlights the critical highlights political, economic, and socio-cultural factors responsible for improvement and degrading of quality provision. The post-independence environment driven by need for empowerment of Africans downgraded the quality of education. Universities like Makerere with constituent colleges in Kenya and Tanzania formed owned Universities in 1973 in the spirit of independence.

### **3. External versus internal quality assurance**

Harvey and Stensaker (2008), argument about external versus internal behavioural control or quality development is whether an ideal quality culture can be developed can be prescribed by external rules and regulations or development of internal culture. Internal quality assurance has more comprehensive mechanisms of improving quality

and therefore leading to automatic compliance by the private and public university. Materu (2007) in his study established that Universities that good internal quality assurance mechanism automatically complied with requirements of the external quality assurance bodies. Internal quality system will embody a culture that builds the quality across the entire organization it's not just about an internal system of quality monitoring or a set of bureaucratic procedures to be followed to ensure quality is achieved within the organization. However, embodies the entire formal and informal mechanisms; mission, policies, culture and belief system of employees of the organization to enhance quality assurance. This will automatically eliminate the burden of policing institutions, individuals but the cultural orientation will drive quality across all the facets of the organization. Quality culture is basically reflects the way in which a group address the issue of quality.

Internal quality assurance as opposed to external quality assurance comes with diverse benefits to the private and public organization. This promotes self-assessment with attention to self-improvement therefore building a culture of quality in the University (Materu, 2007). This is because the process is conducted in collegial manner therefore without pressure and fear of repercussions fosters social cohesion and teamwork with inbuilt mechanism of fostering social cohesion and teamwork among staff, promoting accountability and cultivating commitment and common focus towards quality. Internal quality assurance enables the institution to understand strengths and weaknesses with ability of generating collective commitment to pursue quality. The concept of quality that emanated from the manufacturing sector with focus on providing goods that meet customers' requirements has spread to the service industry. Juran (1988) in defining quality as fitness for purpose and Philip Crosby also defined quality in a similar manner as conformance to requirements this implies that the process of providing quality involves understanding the requirements of the different stakeholders; students, employers, accreditation bodies. According to ISO-802 Quality is total of features and characteristics of a product or service that bears on ability to satisfy stated or implied need. The national and regional and international quality assurance organs focus on externally improving quality in the university education in Africa.

Analysis of the mandates of the quality assurance organs in Africa provides diverse focus but with the main objective of enhancing quality in public and private universities. Materu (2007) argues that privatization and increase in the number of private institutions resulted in the formation of national quality assurance associations to regulate quality. The emergence of private tertiary institutions and the need to regulate their activities appears to have been the main trigger for the establishment of formal QA agencies in most countries (Materu, 2007). The major purpose of quality assurance agencies in Africa has been mainly regulation of the development of the

sector rather than to enhance accountability and quality improvement. This has significantly contributed to the improvement of quality in public and private Universities. The emphasis of the quality assurance conducted at national level is mainly on compliance on established criteria. Despite success by national quality assurance these organs have continued to have also internal weaknesses manifested by a) inadequate funding b) insufficient numbers of adequately trained and credible professional staff at the agencies to manage QA processes with integrity and consistency across institutions/programs and over time; c) inadequate numbers of academic staff in HEIs with knowledge and experience in conducting self-evaluations and peer review b) strain on senior academic staff in HEIs as they have to support both their own internal quality systems as well as external quality assurance processes of their national agencies (Materu, 2007).

El-Khawas (2013) argues that internal quality assurance now needs to occupy a central place in public and private universities. Internal capacity for quality assurance within higher education institutions has been recognized as an essential component in addressing quality assurance holistically (Alabi & Mba, 2012; Njoku, 2012).

**3.1 Customer satisfaction:** the process of enhancing quality by public and private universities systematically enhances quality in the services therefore ensuring customer satisfaction in the universities. This is critical as the quality processes adopted will enable the different stakeholders; accreditation bodies, students, national governments, employers, and entire continent to produce high calibre graduates. Recent research findings indicate that expanding tertiary education may promote faster technological catch-up and improve a country's ability to maximize its economic output (Bloom, Canning, and Chan 2006).

**3.2 Empowerment of all levels of management:** the major contribution of poor quality is unbalanced or disempowerment of the different departments within the university. Internal assessment encourages involvement of the entire organization and the members will collectively work towards improvement of the systems and the processes within the organization. The process of improvement brings about empowerment of the different sectors within the University. Most Universities are poorly empowered with decision making mainly at the top therefore discouraging innovation and creativity in the different levels of the University. More concretely, self-assessment also helps institutions to identify their own strengths and weaknesses, while generating awareness of key performance indicators (Materu, 2007). This process is vital for empowerment of the different levels of the organization.

**3.3 Enhances organization reputation:** private and public universities have made diverse attempts to promote image through advertising, and improvement in the web-rankings sometimes with success but at times with minimal or no success. Internal quality assurance is the best approach for private and public universities to enhance reputation as the different services offered by the University will be improved therefore improving the image of the University among the stakeholders.

**3.4 Increases productivity:** internal quality assurance builds mechanisms for empowerment of the different units within the university and therefore increasing productivity. The process of planning, implementing and monitoring quality aspects within the organization automatically translates towards increased productivity. Reviewing the processes and performance of the organization enables employees to focus on the core aspects of the organization therefore increasing productivity. Experience from institutions within case study countries shows that the self-assessment process (at institutional or unit level) has positive effects on the culture of quality within an institution or unit (Materu, 2007). Culture quality is imperative for the improvement the reputation of the organization.

**3.5 Enhances efficient use of resources:** the process of internal quality assurance with audits, internal assessments of all the units of the university will provide management with insight on the resources used in the different units together with success of the different units. This is critical in enhancing quality across the University.

**3.6 Improved profitability:** the private entities focus on increasing profits by cutting costs but improvement in quality will automatically enable private universities to charge education at fair prices and attracting large masses that can increase revenue therefore making universities more profitable. Public universities with a mandate of providing quality and affordable education similarly will improve the reputation locally and internationally. The process of improvement of internal quality by undertaking different mechanisms for quality assurance dynamically improves profitability.

**3.7 Addressing key problem areas:** internal quality assurance provides an organization with information that can be critical in addressing the key problem areas as the private and public Universities will not wait to realize weaknesses but the internal quality assurance facilitates in identification and make internal mechanisms for improvement of internal problems.

## **4.0 Challenges in quality assurance in Africa**

**4.1 Internal Quality Assurance Policy:** the major challenge in quality assurance in private universities lack of comprehensive quality assurance policies. IUCEA-DAAD (2010) argues that an internal quality assurance policy statement must explicitly contain the relationship between teaching and research at the institution; the institution's strategy on quality and standards; how the quality assurance system is organised; the responsibilities of departments, schools, faculties and other organisational units and individuals for assuring quality; the involvement of students in quality assurance; and the ways in which the policy is implemented, monitored and revised. However, private universities most times have basic policies in order to basically fulfil the requirement of regulative agencies. Modern universities like University of Cambridge have a comprehensive and well documented policy framework to advance quality assurance forward. However the African counterparts have limitations. Private universities need to provide an appropriate policy that systematically.

**4.2 Inadequate capacity to undertake staff development:** private universities have limitations to continuously develop staff in the various that supports university mission; teaching, research, consultancy and community outreach. Capacity building is critical in the process of continuous improvement. Public and private universities in Africa have major challenges in the capacity of staff that undertaking teaching and learning. This has been partly due to constraints in resources in the public and private sector. Whereas previously the private universities had adequate capacities but increasing enrolment in the public Universities and inadequate resources have negatively affected the capacity development. Romina (2013) posited that vibrant staff development programme on a continuous basis will help academics and non-academics to clarify and modify their behaviour, attitude, value, skills and competencies.

**4.3 Poor research performance:** public and private universities in Africa have major challenge of poor research performance due to limitations in resources, capacity of staff and infrastructure to undertake modern and up to date research. This has tremendously limited the capacity of African Universities in undertaking research and development. Most occasions have limitations in research and innovative capacity that limits in attainment of quality education in the higher institution of learning. Sursock (2011) argues that institutions of higher education are increasingly viewed by policy makers as 'economic engines' and are seen as essential for ensuring knowledge production through research and innovation and the education and continuous up-skilling of the workforce. However, African public and private universities have continued to have limitations in undertaking research and development. This has tremendously limited



their contribution towards the contribution of development in respective countries. Antony (2000), suggests that higher education institutions should have a vigorous and well scrutinised publication programme and actively encourage staff to publish.

**4.4 Poor curriculum design, evaluation and review:** public and private universities in Africa have challenges in improvement of the curriculums that are being used for instruction. Quality university education can best be harnessed by undertaking timely and appropriate curriculum designs and reviews. Public and private universities have to continuously undertake curriculum design, evaluation and review of curriculums. However, the cost of undertaking curriculum review and development come at high costs that private universities in most occasions have limitations. Kaysay (2012) argues for provision of quality education internal quality assurance therefore has to focus on core educational processes involving coherence in the design, delivery, evaluation and/or review of the curriculum. However, most African Universities have continued to experience challenges in the process of providing appropriate instruction.

**4.5 Teaching and learning:** the core mandate of universities as institutions of teaching and learning is provision of sound academic programmes that facilitate the building of necessary competence of students. There is a challenge by most private university having inadequate skilled human resources both quantity and quality to undertake the mandate of teaching and learning. Whereas the accreditation process provide for mechanism for verification of quantity and quality of lecturers but this may end up being a window dressing event as opposed to real objective of the university. Public and private universities in most occasions have limited resources to undertake appropriate recruitment and staffing to meet the requirements of the Universities. Appropriate quality assurance practices have to focus on improvement of teaching and learning together assessment of processes (Kaysay, 2012). The quality assurance exercise needs to ensure coherence in curricula, teaching and learning, together with assessment processes of whether key educational processes are properly executed, monitored and continuously improved.

**4.6 Effective university student assessment:** standards can best be harnessed by having consistent and progressive assessment mechanisms that promote and encourage innovation and creativity. Student assessment must measure consistently knowledge, evaluation and creativity of students. Universities have also to provide an assessment criterion which should be published with regulations that are consistently applied across the board without fear or favour. However, public and private Universities in Africa have continued suffering from poor students' assessment. Loukkola and Zhang (2010), argue that the quality assurance procedures and processes facilitate international

recognition of standards of award. Lessons from other parts of the world provide improvement in students' assessment as a critical facet towards improvement in quality University Education. Students' assessment is instrumental in providing an appropriate basis for improvement in standards in University education. Private universities therefore need to embrace the culture of assessment as a means of facilitating international recognition of the standards of awards (ENQA, 2010; Antony, 2000), as the products universities are intended for global markets. The mandate of public and private universities to provide quality education therefore becoming engines of economic development can best be harnessed by having appropriate capacity building mechanisms (Sursock (2011)).

**4.7 Student Support Services:** production of goods and services go through a process in order for quality to harness therefore needs for improvement in the processes that the product and services provided. Quality assurance in universities has to systematically mainstream quality across all the process that the student goes through. Quality assurance services in the university therefore have to undertake all the various student support services. Most public and private Universities have inadequate student support services for the students. Quality education can best be harnessed through provision of an appropriate learning and teaching environment. The support services provided by the non-teaching staff are critical element towards development of students and academia. Public and private universities therefore have to establish a good holistic environment that supports the achievement of quality student learning. Physical and material as well as social and/or psychological environment that is supportive of learning and is appropriate to the activities involved must be considered (IUCEA-DAAD, 2010).

**4.8 Infrastructure development:** the critical challenge among private universities in Africa is infrastructure to facilitate provision of quality education. Abebe (2014) in his study of Public universities in Ethiopia established that inadequacy of human, material, and financial resources necessary for institutionalising quality assurance was inhibiting provision of quality education in Ethiopia. This is a critical challenge to providers of education both in private and public universities in Africa. This has been further dampened by globalisation, mass higher education and diversity in its provision, decline in public investment in higher education (Altbach, 2013; Mohamedbai, 2008; OECD, 2008; UNESCO, 2004). Most studies highlight inadequacy of classrooms, libraries, laboratories, office accommodation, and lecture theatres, sports equipment. CHEA (2009) highlights that poor infrastructure; classrooms, laboratories, libraries therefore affecting teaching and learning environment affects internal quality assurance

in higher educational institutions in Africa. Poor quality in infrastructure systematically lowers teaching, learning and research functions in higher institutions of learning.

**4.9 Provision of quality education for students with specialised needs:** universities have a challenge in provision of education to students with specialized needs. Paul (2000) argues that disabled students face attitudinal and physical barriers within the university environment. Most scholars argue that inadequate planning and management of curricula and buildings accessible, academic and non-academic support creates barriers for disabled students' retention and achievement (Mumba, 2009; Matshedisho, 2007). Chataika (2010) further argues that the debate about provision of university education to disabled students is discussed in terms of physical access and the shape and design of the built environment. However, the challenges of disabled students are more than just physical access but also include social, economic and political barriers both at the community and the university. United Nations (2006) asserts that assistive devices for the disabled are critical in ensuring that quality education is provided to the students with special needs.

**4.10 Inadequate capacity to undertake quality assurance:** quality assurance involves the process of undertaking the assessment of the systems, process and delivery of service ability to meet the required standards. The skills for undertaking quality assurance are critical for advancement in university education. However, most private universities in Africa have inadequate capacity to undertake this assessment as a result of capacity. Kahsay (2012) in his studies established that most of the quality assurance offices in the country were ill-equipped with only one officer to undertake quality assurance activities. Several studies in quality assurance establish that there is inadequate capacity in terms of skills and personnel to effectively undertake quality assurance.

Quality assurance in African Universities continues to suffer with inadequacy in capacity; skills, personnel, resources, equipment and technological. Seniwoliba and Yakubu (2015) argue that Directorate of quality in most universities was not properly integrated into university programmes and activities therefore rendering the quality assurance unit ineffective. This is further dampened by fact that poor planning and management of quality assurance activities in the universities. Most universities only emphasize the process of quality assurance during the time of accreditation of the University and university programmes but there is no systematic process to continuously undertake quality assurance as a process of system improvement. Okae-Adjei (2012) in his study of Ghanaian institutions of higher education noted that inadequate staff in the quality assurance office undermined the performance of quality

assurance activities in the University. Abebe (2014) established that even European Universities face a challenge in capacity building of quality assurance office.

**4.11 Funding and Budget Constraints:** institutions in Africa generally continuously suffering from inadequate resources. Private universities in Africa have resources mainly to undertake Kahsay (2012) in his study of Ethiopia noted that establishment of structures and policies for quality assurance is an important step in improvement of quality assurance in universities but the efforts can be undermined without funding. The public universities significantly face the same challenges Kiamba (2003) highlights that University of Nairobi, student cost-sharing produced 37 percent of the institution's recurrent budget in 2002, in Ghana, student fees contributed 31 percent of university budgets in 2005 (Adu and Orivel 2006), University of The Gambia, student fees represented about 70 percent of overall expenditure in 2003/04 (University of The Gambia 2005). Universities don't have adequate funds to meet daily operations and routine activities of salaries making quality assurance a luxury. Whereas there could be efforts to undertake quality assurance is a piece meal to satisfy the regulatory requirements. Materu (2007) who reported that compared to more developed higher education systems in the world, quality assurance systems in Africa is still at an infant stage and thus confronted by many challenges.

**4.12 Negative attitude towards quality assurance:** quality assurance in universities faces a challenge of negative attitude. Seniwoliba and Yakubu (2015) in their study about quality assurance in Ghanaian Universities established that the staff in Universities views quality assurance negatively instead of appreciating the role of quality assurance. Quality assurance in Ethiopian Universities was constrained by negative attitude (Kahsay, 2; Abebe, 2014). The university staff instead of supporting quality assurance instead views quality assurance as a tool used by management discipline staff or overloading staff with more work. Okae-Adjei, (2012) in his study also established that quality assurance was not established by staff as most academic staff viewed quality assurance unit with suspicion. There is resistance to quality assurance in universities because of lack of awareness, resistance to innovations and staff generally feels threatened (IUCEA-DAAD, 2010). It's imperative therefore for universities to continuously create awareness to university staff about the benefits of quality assurance to individuals and the entire University.

**4.13 Student-Lecturer Assessment:** the principles of total quality management argues quality assessment is undertaken from the perspectives of the customers. Most universities have not put in place appropriate mechanisms for assessment of lecturers performance in accordance to the students. The students experience in the delivery by

lecturer facilitates in the improvement of the quality of service provided by the lecturers. Students are best situated to judge the quality of teaching and learning as there are the ones that experience the method of delivery. The students use the facilities, interact with university service providers both academic and support services. The information provided by the students is critical in improvement of university services. Private universities need to continuously use the evaluation results to systematically improving the services provided by universities. Sursock (2011) argues culture of quality comprises of shared philosophy, beliefs, values, expectations and commitments to quality is the most effective way of providing quality education in higher institutions of learning.

**4.14 Lack of commitment by management and staff towards quality:** quality culture requires management support and commitment by all stakeholders in the University towards quality. Top management has a responsibility of supporting quality management by development of quality policy together with providing resources that facilitate incorporation of quality standards in university work. Management has to continuously incorporate programmes for continuous improvement of university programmes. Romina (2013) established that most institutions of higher learning in Nigeria lacked staff development programmes for training and re-training of staff. Materu (2007) stated that weak human capacity is one of the main current constraints to the development of quality assurance in Africa. The quality assurance activities require the support of the academic and non-academic staff towards quality improvement. Kahsay (2012) observed that lack of staff commitment and engagement was a major challenge towards adaptation and implementation of quality assurance in universities in Africa.

## **5. Strategies for addressing quality education**

**5.1 Establishment of comprehensive quality assurance policies:** in order to appropriately address the challenge lack of internal quality assurance policies. Universities have to establish quality assurance policies that are mindful of the unique aspects of the university. The policies should guide the University community in all aspects of quality management; clearly identifying the weaknesses and areas for improvement and appropriate management of quality assurance in the University. Leading Universities have understood that quality is an aspect must be mainstreamed to all the process of the University. Most African Universities have challenges in undertaking appropriate quality mechanism because of lack of internal quality assurance policy. The internal quality assurance policy has to be comprehensive explicitly addressing the core mandate of the University. The policy must identify the

relationship between teaching and research at the institution; the institution's strategy on quality and standards; how the quality assurance system is organised; the responsibilities of departments, schools, faculties and other organisational units and individuals for assuring quality; the involvement of students in quality assurance; and the ways in which the policy is implemented, monitored and revised IUCEA-DAAD (2010). In case of Universities without adequate policies there should be efforts to review policies in order to provide adequate mechanisms for management of quality in the University.

Internal Quality Assurance policy has to reflect; university mission, complexity, diversity and federal structure of the university, nature of the community of scholars. This will provide a conviction to all the academic staff, non-teaching staff and students an aspiration for quality. The policy should be in position to identify the roles of the different stakeholders in relation to quality management. Management must have an overall responsibility of quality management but with delegated responsibilities to different constituents of the University. Policy must also be designed to address unique aspects of the university, potential areas of risk, and provide for establishment of quality assurance office.

**5.2 Provide for capacity improvement and staff development:** the critical challenge of capacity in terms of equipment and staff has to be addressed in order to effectively improve on quality. Public and private universities in Africa have to provide appropriate mechanisms for undertaking capacity building in order to improve the quality of delivery. Universities have to build core competences among their staff in areas of teaching, research, consultancy and community outreach. This will help Universities in Africa to continuously improve in the delivery of their programmes in teaching, research and community service. Romina (2013) posited that vibrant staff development programme on a continuous basis will help academics and non-academics to clarify and modify their behaviour, attitude, value, skills and competencies. This calls for public and private universities to put in place mechanisms that will to continuously develop and satisfy itself with qualified and competent staff to carry out the university core activities of the institution; teaching and learning, research, community service and consultancy. This should be coupled with adequate policies for appointment procedures with adequate staff appraisal system and development activities.

**5.3 Research Performance:** public and private universities in Africa have challenges in provision of quality research undertakings. This undermines the universities effectiveness in supporting communities in research and development. Public and private Universities in Africa have to improve research performance by resource mobilization, enhancement of collaborations arrangements with outside Universities.

This will enable universities to improve the quality of education provided and make a vital contribution to African continent that critically requires research and innovation to move to the next level of development. Sursock (2011) argues that institutions of higher education are increasingly viewed by policy makers as 'economic engines' and are seen as essential for ensuring knowledge production through research and innovation and the education and continuous up-skilling of the workforce. Research and development activities need to be mainstreamed into the programmes of both public and private universities. Antony (2000), suggests that higher education institutions should have a vigorous and well scrutinised publication programme and actively encourage staff to publish.

**5.4 Improvement in curriculum design, evaluation and review:** in order to continuously provide quality university education there needs to be support towards the private universities in design, evaluation and review of curriculums. However, the cost of undertaking curriculum review and development come at high costs that private universities in most occasions have limitations. Kaysay (2012) argues for provision of quality education internal quality assurance therefore has to focus on core educational processes involving coherence in the design, delivery, evaluation and/or review of the curriculum. Most university curriculums are reviewed with limited involvement of the stakeholders within the University and the industry. This brings different challenges as the curriculum end up producing scholars that are not marketable. Universities have to undertake appropriate measures for incorporating the views of all the stakeholders in the curriculum review process in order to improve the quality of graduates. Efforts must be undertaken to bench mark with the best performers in the subjects of focus. Curriculums guide the lecturers on the critical aspects of the instruction and this is largely responsible for production of quality products in the university. CHEA (2009) argues that quality assurance increases the confidence of the public in higher education programmes and qualifications and facilitates articulation between programmes of different higher education sectors and institutions.

**5.5 Improvement in teaching and learning:** the core mandate of universities as institutions of teaching and learning is provision of sound academic programmes that facilitate the building of necessary competence of students. The massification of University education together with diverse challenges has undermined the teaching and learning. Universities have to streamline the programmes by reduction student numbers and enhance the capacity of the academic staff in order to improve teaching and learning. Governments in Africa have to ensure increased funding in the education sector as a means of improvement of quality of teaching and learning. The quality of teaching and learning is undermined by monitoring of University programmes and

teaching. Universities have to establish proper monitoring and quality assurance units to monitor teaching and learning in Universities. The challenge of inadequacies of skilled manpower can be improved by collaboration with partners to enhance skilled manpower development. Whereas the accreditation process provide for mechanism for verification of quantity and quality of lecturers but this may end up being a window dressing event as opposed to real objective of the university. Private universities in most occasions have limited resources to undertake appropriate recruitment and staffing to meet the requirements of the Universities. Appropriate quality assurance practice has to focus on improvement of teaching and learning together assessment of processes (Kaysay, 2012). The quality assurance exercise needs to ensure coherence in curricula, teaching and learning, together with assessment processes of whether key educational processes are properly executed, monitored and continuously improved.

**5.6 Effective university student assessment:** standards can best be harnessed by having consistent and progressive assessment mechanisms that promote and encourage innovation and creativity. Student assessment must measure consistently knowledge, evaluation and creativity of students. Universities have also to provide assessment criteria which should be published with regulations that are consistently applied across the board without fear or favour. Loukkola and Zhang (2010), argue that the quality assurance procedures and processes facilitate international recognition of standards of award. Leading universities have learnt to consistently undertake students' assessment in order to motivate hard work by both students and lecturers to aspire for excellence. Public and private universities in Africa therefore need to embrace the culture of assessment as a means of facilitating international recognition of the standards of awards (ENQA, 2010; Antony, 2000), as the products universities are intended for global markets.

**5.7 Student Support Services:** production of goods and services go through a process in order for quality to harness therefore needs for improvement in the processes that the product and services provided. Quality assurance in universities has to systematically mainstream quality across all the process that the student goes through. Quality assurance services in the university therefore have to undertake all the various student support services. Establishment of a good holistic environment that supports the achievement of quality student learning, physical and material as well as social and/or psychological environment that is supportive of learning and is appropriate to the activities involved must be considered (IUCEA-DAAD, 2010). Public and private Universities have to systematically come up with programmes for improvement of students support services to enhance students' experience of learning and training.



**5.8 Improvement and development of university Infrastructure:** public and private universities in Africa have continued to encounter a problem of poor infrastructure for teaching and learning. Different studies point out inadequacies in the higher education infrastructure in public and private Universities. Abebe (2014) in his study of Public universities in Ethiopia established that inadequacy of human, material, and financial resources necessary for institutionalising quality assurance was inhibiting provision of quality education in Ethiopia. African universities, governments and stakeholders in education have to improve and develop infrastructure as a means of improvement of education standards. Infrastructure is critical towards provision of quality education in Africa. Technological advancements also call for investment in modern technology as a means of improving standards. Most studies highlight inadequacy of classrooms, libraries, laboratories, office accommodation, and lecture theatres, sports equipment. CHEA (2009) highlights that poor infrastructure; classrooms, laboratories, libraries therefore affecting teaching and learning environment affects internal quality assurance in higher educational institutions in Africa. Poor quality in infrastructure systematically lowers teaching, learning and research functions in higher institutions of learning. Stakeholders in University education have to systematically come up with programmes that will improve University infrastructure.

**5.9 Provision of quality education for students with specialised needs:** universities have a challenge in provision of education to students with specialized needs. Paul (2000) argues that disabled students face attitudinal and physical barriers within the university environment. Universities have to deliberately design programmes and provide infrastructure to take care of the disabled students. This will facilitate removal of barriers that hinder the disabled students from attaining quality education. Most scholars argue that inadequate planning and management of curricula and buildings accessible, academic and non-academic support creates barriers for disabled students' retention and achievement (Mumba, 2009; Matshediso, 2007). Public and private Universities in Africa also have to undertake programme design that enhances the learning process for the disabled students. Development of appropriate programmes together with support services for the students with specialised needs will enhance equitable access to University education. Chataika (2010) further argues that the debate about provision of university education to disabled students is discussed in terms of physical access and the shape and design of the built environment. There should be deliberate mechanisms for removal of social, economic and political barriers both at the community and the university. United Nations (2006) asserts that assistive devices for the disabled are critical in ensuring that quality education is provided to the students with special needs.

**5.10 Develop capacity to undertake internal quality assurance:** quality assurance involves the process of undertaking the assessment of the systems, process and delivery of service ability to meet the required standards. Public and private universities need to develop capacity to undertake internal quality assurance in order to improve the delivery of programmes. The skills for undertaking quality assurance are critical for advancement in university education. However, most private universities in Africa have inadequate capacity to undertake this assessment as a result of capacity. Kahsay (2012) in his studies established that most of the quality assurance offices in the country were ill-equipped with only one officer to undertake quality assurance activities. This is as a result of diverse factors in internal quality assurance. Seniwoliba and Yakubu (2015) argue that Directorate of quality in most universities was not properly integrated into university programmes and activities therefore rendering the quality assurance unit ineffective. CHEA (2009) argues that quality assurance increases the confidence of the public in higher education programmes and qualifications and facilitates articulation between programmes of different higher education sectors and institutions. Materu (2007) who reported that compared to more developed higher education systems in the world, quality assurance systems in Africa is still at an infant stage and thus confronted by many challenges.

**5.11 Provide adequate funding and budgeting for public and private universities:** public and private universities in Africa need to provide adequate funding for university programmes. Several studies highlight inadequacies in funding and budgeting in public and private universities. The public universities significantly face the same challenges Kiamba (2003) highlights that University of Nairobi, student cost-sharing produced 37 % of the institution's recurrent budget in 2002, in Ghana, student fees contributed 31% of university budgets in 2005 (Adu and Orivel 2006), University of The Gambia, student fees represented about 70% of overall expenditure in 2003/04 (University of The Gambia 2005). Limited funding undermines the ability of universities to meet daily operations and routine activities of salaries making quality assurance a luxury. It's imperative therefore for universities to develop innovative approaches of fund raising as a means of improvement of academic programmes. African governments have to come up with strategies of adequately undertaking funding for the public universities and provide incentives such as subsidies and tax holidays for the private universities as a means of Whereas there could be efforts to undertake quality assurance is a piece meal to satisfy the regulatory requirements.

**5.12 Negative attitude towards quality assurance:** quality assurance in universities faces a challenge of negative attitude. Seniwoliba and Yakubu (2015) in their study about quality assurance in Ghanaian Universities established that the staff in

Universities views quality assurance negatively instead of appreciating the role of quality assurance. Quality assurance in Ethiopian Universities was constrained by negative attitude (Kahsay, 2; Abebe, 2014). The university staff instead of supporting quality assurance instead views quality assurance as a tool used by management discipline staff or overloading staff with more work. Okae-Adjei, (2012) in his study also established that quality assurance was not established by staff as most academic staff viewed quality assurance unit with suspicion. There is resistance to quality assurance in universities because of lack of awareness, resistance to innovations and staff generally feels threatened (IUCEA-DAAD, 2010). It's imperative therefore for universities to continuously create awareness to university staff about the benefits of quality assurance to individuals and the entire University. Motivation of performing lecturers is critical in enhancement of quality assurance culture in Universities.

**5.13 Student-Lecturer Assessment:** the principles of total quality management argue quality assessment is undertaken from the perspectives of the customers. Most universities have not put in place appropriate mechanisms for assessment of lecturers performance in accordance to the students. The students experience in the delivery by lecturer facilitates in the improvement of the quality of service provided by the lecturers. Students are best situated to judge the quality of teaching and learning as there are the ones that experience the method of delivery. The students use the facilities, interact with university service providers both academic and support services. The information provided by the students is critical in improvement of university services. Public and private universities need to continuously use the evaluation results to systematically improving the services provided by universities. Sursock (2011) argues culture of quality comprises of shared philosophy, beliefs, values, expectations and commitments to quality is the most effective way of providing quality education in higher institutions of learning.

**5.14 Lack of commitment by management and staff towards quality:** quality culture requires management support and commitment by all stakeholders in the University towards quality. Top management has a responsibility of supporting quality management by development of quality policy together with providing resources that facilitate incorporation of quality standards in university work. Management has to continuously incorporate programmes for continuous improvement of university programmes. Romina (2013) established that most institutions of higher learning in Nigeria lacked staff development programmes for training and re-training of staff. Materu (2007) stated that weak human capacity is one of the main current constraints to the development of quality assurance in Africa. The quality assurance activities require the support of the academic and non-academic staff towards quality improvement.

Kahsay (2012) observed that lack of staff commitment and engagement was a major challenge towards adaptation and implementation of quality assurance in universities in Africa.

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion public and private universities have experienced diverse challenges in the process of providing quality education. External quality assurance provides mechanisms for improvement of quality education. However, there are limitations as quality can best be enhanced internally by the university management. Quality assurance shouldn't be an aspect to be managed at national level only through the national associations and ministry but calls for concerted efforts by all stakeholders. The challenges in quality assurance; lack of quality assurance policy, inadequate funding, staff development, research performance, curriculum design, teaching and learning, effective university student assessment, student support services, infrastructure development, special needs education for disabled students, poor management, lecturer student assessment, negative attitude towards quality assurance, plagiarism, and inadequate capacity undertake quality assurance. Internal quality assurance for universities is needs to addressed holistically bearing in mind the challenges and seeking to address the root causes from sources and completely mitigating negative impacts of changing global and local trends. Internal capacity for quality assurance within higher education institutions has been recognised as an essential component in addressing quality assurance holistically (Alabi & Mba, 2012; Njoku, 2012). The holistic approach for addressing quality assurance has to be established within the challenges affecting higher institutions of learning.

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